

COMMUNITY OPINION

# High-density apartments are not beneficial to Plano

Plano city staff will submit the final version of the Plano Tomorrow plan, a comprehensive plan for the city, to the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval next Monday at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1520 K Ave.

As a citizen of Plano you are invited. Please voice your opinion on it to the commissioners, who are volunteers designated to represent the citizens of Plano.

Over the past 10 months, Plano citizens have attended meetings, voiced their comments and concerns and sent 600 letters expressing their disagreement with the land use elements of the plan. In spite of thousands of comments from a city-sponsored survey, letters to the city and public input at open houses and a public forum, the interim plan has remained unchanged.

In these forums, citizens have consistently said they do not want a proliferation of apartments throughout the whole city. Created by city staff, the plan emphasizes high-density apartment development.

The underlying theme across the city these areas has the same result — to add more high-density apartments to the city. The plan will worsen the current crowding and over-utilization of Plano's schools, streets and public service environment. The commission has already approved construction of more than 10,000 new multifamily apartments since January 2014.

We believe the new Plano Tomorrow plan must reflect the suburban residential nature of Plano. We are for the smart growth policies that our neighbors Frisco and Allen display regularly in their rezoning. Our neighbors favor more owner-stakeholders in the community, not less, to help build what we know as the wonderful suburban city Plano has been throughout it's history.

The city has already approved massive complexes of apartments (approximately 2,500 units) in southern Plano along Coit Road at Mapleshade Lane, a new 450-unit mid-rise complex on crowded Preston Road at the closed Lexus dealership just north of Plano Parkway and 1,100 additional units at Custer Road south of Plano Parkway.

In spite of much delay to hear citizens concerns, the plan seeks to add dense apartment developments in the remaining seven percent of Plano's undeveloped land and by redeveloping existing com-



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Plano Resident

mercial and retail areas like Park and Preston and Lakeside. We stand with PlanoFuture.org and its committee of Plano citizen/stakeholders in opposing these low-quality, poorly planned apartment "communities."

The apartment developers claim that apartments do not affect schools. Southern Plano schools have had a huge drop off in academic rating. Huffman Elementary alone has dropped from 90th percentile to 36th percentile over the past decade due to surrounding aging apartment stock with decreased rents.

We stand opposed to the underlying missteps of the Plano Tomorrow plan and urge its rejection. We are pro-growth, but we favor high-quality growth, and in short, we support: putting Plano schools as a top priority; enhanced police and fire emergency services; low traffic and easy access on our city's main arterial roads; smart growth such as employment centers and quality residential neighborhoods, schools and churches; stakeholders added to the community; redevelopment of aging retail; and high-quality multi-family development near mass transit stations.

Without good schools, security and healthy suburban neighborhoods, we will easily lose our standing as a great place to live to Frisco, Allen and McKinney — all of whom seem to "get it." In the long run, declining property valuations will negate any short-term advantage to high-density apartment property taxes.

These are the principles that will assure and enhance Plano's standing as a great place to live and raise a new generation of leaders. The Plano Tomorrow plan allows for more apartment rezoning. It is opposed to these smart growth goals, and we urge its rejection.

Please join us Monday in support of a modern, growing, single-family residential Plano that supports community standards, as well as smart growth. Our Plano is depending on you.

*Judy Kendler writes on behalf of the PlanoFuture.org group.*

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